

MEL TORMÉ Sings
SUNDAY IN NEW YORK
& OTHER SONGS ABOUT NEW YORK



AUTUMN IN NEW YORK • MANHATTAN • HARLEM NOCTURNE
FORTY SECOND STREET • LET ME OFF UPTOWN • BROADWAY
SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK • LULLABY OF BIRDLAND • NEW YORK, NEW YORK
THERE'S A BROKEN HEART FOR EVERY LIGHT ON BROADWAY
THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE



ATLANTIC MASTERS

WORLD
JAZZ

8091



ATLANTIC MASTERS



8122733362

MEL TORMÉ SUNDAY IN NEW YORK

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. SUNDAY IN NEW YORK | 2.31 |
| 2. AUTUMN IN NEW YORK | 3.24 |
| 3. LULLABY OF BIRDLAND | 2.30 |
| 4. BROADWAY | 2.14 |
| 5. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE | 2.41 |
| 6. LET ME OFF UPTOWN | 2.35 |
| 7. FORTY SECOND STREET | 2.35 |
| 8. SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK | 2.17 |
| 9. HARLEM NOCTURNE
<i>(Nocturne For The Blues)</i> | 3.52 |
| 10. NEW YORK, NEW YORK | 2.19 |
| 11. THERE'S A BROKEN HEART FOR
EVERY LIGHT ON BROADWAY | 2.21 |
| 12. MANHATTAN | 3.11 |
| 13. MY TIME OF DAY | 1.20 |



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MEL TORMÉ SUNDAY IN NEW YORK



- | | | | |
|---|------|---|------|
| 1. SUNDAY IN NEW YORK
From the MGM Production
<i>Sunday In New York</i>
Peter Nero / Carroll Coates
Hastings Music Corp. | 2.31 | 8. SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK
Traditional
Publishing Information Not Available | 2.17 |
| 2. AUTUMN IN NEW YORK
Vernon Duke
Harms, Inc. | 3.24 | 9. HARLEM NOCTURNE
<i>(Nocturne For The Blues)</i>
Sid Robin / Earle Hagen
Shapiro Bernstein Co, Inc. | 3:52 |
| 3. LULLABY OF BIRDLAND
George Shearing
EMI Longitude Music | 2.30 | 10. NEW YORK, NEW YORK
Leonard Bernstein / Betty Comden /
Adolph Green
Leonard Bernstein Music Publishing | 2.19 |
| 4. BROADWAY
Teddy McRae / Bill Bird / Henry Wood
Rayven, Inc. | 2.14 | 11. THERE'S A BROKEN HEART FOR
EVERY LIGHT ON BROADWAY
Fred Fisher / H. Johnson
EMI Music Publishing Ltd | 2.21 |
| 5. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE
Sammy Cahn / Jules Styne
Sands Music Corp. | 2.41 | 12. MANHATTAN
Richard Rodgers / Lorenz Hart
Francis Day & Hunter Ltd | 3.11 |
| 6. LET ME OFF UPTOWN
Earl Bostic / Redd Evans
MCA Duchess Music Corp. / Chappell Music Ltd | 2.35 | 13. MY TIME OF DAY
Frank Loesser
Frank Music Corp. /
MPC Communications Ltd | 1.20 |
| 7. FORTY SECOND STREET
Al Dubin / Harry Warren
Witmark M. Sons / B. Feldman & Co. Ltd | 2.35 | | |

There is something of an irony in the fact that Atlantic and Mel Tormé pooled their resources in 1962. Tormé, who had come to prominence as a teenager fronting his Mel-Tones in the mid 1940s doing hip versions of Sinatra, was a vastly gifted singer, songwriter and performer shaped by the big band era. But he was also at a point of transition. He had followed the Sinatra path in the 1950s, making high-quality swing albums, often with large ensembles, occasionally live, serving the supper-club clientele who mostly attended his performances and would be happy to slip into the local record shop to pick up his latest. However, by 1962 his tenure at Verve records had come to an end, Norman Granz having sold the label to MGM and Creed Taylor, the new boss there, looking for more contemporary sounds in crossover jazz. To Taylor's mind, Tormé's whole approach was redolent of the Granz era and one which he did not care to cultivate.

So, while Taylor was signing up Jimmy Smith, Wes Montgomery and Cal Tjader, Tormé was headed out the door. Newly unattached, he attracted the attention of Atlantic, who had a similar lull in their lives. In 1960 Ray Charles had left the label, his unique versatility depriving Nesuhi Ertegun of a major jazz name as well as Ahmet and Jerry Wexler of a sensational soul and blues success. By 1962 Bobby Darin had also jumped ship, taking his confident amalgamation of jazz, rock and showbiz ('Splish Splash', 'Mack The Knife', even 'What'd I Say') to Capitol, where he enjoyed further chart action. Although resplendent with top-flight female singers in every category and blessed with cutting-edge soul and R&B male solos and groups, Atlantic needed a class male act who was versatile enough to appeal to early '60s crossover audiences. For a while, it seemed, Mel Tormé fitted the bill.

The first move the two made together was logical enough, putting Tormé and his trio in front of the intimate type of club audience he thrived upon for an album, and the March 1962 set from the *Red Hill Inn* in New Jersey was warmly received in jazz circles. At *The Red Hill*, reviewed in a September 1962 *Down Beat* magazine by Harvey Pekar, found the critic claiming "this album should refocus attention on a talent that has too long been taken for granted." The repertoire was Porter, Ellington, Kern and their ilk and Tormé remained superlative in his interpretations.

MEL TORMÉ SUNDAY IN NEW YORK

However, Tormé and Atlantic chose not to follow this up with a similarly conventional studio date – he'd done plenty of those for Verve. Instead, they came up with 'Comin' Home Baby', a charting hit both as a single and album and a venture which took Tormé unexpectedly in the crossover direction Verve's Creed Taylor had thought beyond him. Suddenly Tormé was both an accomplished veteran who was both hip and influential: a highly unusual combination even in early 1963. His angle on things was taken up by many, not least Britain's Georgie Fame.

So what did artist and company do? Well, two more singles were released as follow-ups, both in the same crossover mould: 'Cast Your Fate To The Wind', written by pianist Vince Guaraldi and an instrumental hit in September 1963; and 'Gravy Waltz', a Ray Brown composition that was enjoying many cover versions at this time. Neither did the business of 'Comin' Home Baby' but both charted stateside. Yet when the singer re-entered the studio for his next album project, it was as if the previous year's crossover headway was discounted. *Sunday In New York & Other Songs About New York* was Mel back in big-band fronting mode, singing a ream of songs most of which were at least a decade or two old.

This album appeared in mid 1964 and garnered rave reviews generally. *Down Beat's* John Tynan wrote: "This is New York in mood and motif, in words and music. And this is Tormé in quite delightful, swinging tribute to the most fascinating, frightening, and unforgettable city." After averring that, in his opinion, Tormé was the best current male jazz vocalist, Tynan asserted "through all the songs and varying moods the singer glides easily, now blending with the orchestra in the manner of an additional instrument, now carrying the lead with an assurance that marks him Boss Man." A big statement, but one that is not let down by the music on the record. Tormé sings brilliantly, is inspired by his city theme and delivers one of the most sophisticated and worldly takes on New York City ever committed to disc.

The Tormé-Atlantic partnership came to a halt after this disc: the singer immersed himself in TV and other media-related work on the West Coast and absented himself from the rapidly-evolving music business scene for most of the rest of the decade. He would return briefly to Atlantic once more in

the 1970s, but by then not only the crossover scene but also jazz and big band singing had changed unrecognisably. Still, the three albums he made for Atlantic in the early 1960s remain an artistic highpoint, each with its distinct flavour and possessing the musical integrity that only Tormé at his best could muster.

KEITH SHADWICK

ORIGINAL LINER NOTES

Mel Tormé, and an album of songs about New York – that's surely as natural a combination as the name of that New York landmark, the Waldorf-Astoria. It is something of a mystery that Mel never recorded an album of New York songs before. But let us not dwell on past omissions. Let us be grateful that this collection has become a reality.

This album received a helpful push from MGM when they decided to produce a motion picture called *Sunday In New York*. Someone, obviously very wise, arranged to have Mel Tormé sing the title song at the beginning of the film. In addition to Mel's scene-setting vocal the movie contains sterling performances by Jane Fonda, Cliff Robertson and Rod Taylor. Of course, an entire motion picture wasn't necessary to encourage Mel to record a musical tribute to New York, but *Sunday In New York*, which is the opening song in the album, crystallised an idea that had been standing in the wings altogether too long.

When Mel Tormé sings the thirteen loves songs to New York in this LP, it is very much like listening to a musical autobiography. New York is Mel's town, and he knows it from Battery Place to the Bronx Zoo. He expresses the vivid imagery contained in the lyrics of these songs as only someone can who has paid long New York dues. Ironically, Mel doesn't live in New York – he has established residency in California where this album was recorded. But New York is in his bloodstream, and his love affair is no sometime thing.



MEL TORMÉ SUNDAY IN NEW YORK

The variety of songs that have been written about New York is as incredible as the city itself. East Side, West Side, Uptown and Downtown, the writers of songs are fairly bursting to say something about their town. The numbers chosen cover a lot of ground: Jazz, Tin Pan Alley, Broadway musicals, Harlem bandstands and even a hang-over or two from Vaudeville.

There are any number of special delights in the various selections as you will discover for yourself – but I can't help pointing out at least two. In 'Let Me Off Uptown', the brass ensemble during and after Mel's vocal is almost a note for note transcription of Roy Eldridge's classic trumpet solo in the original Gene Krupa record with Anita O'Day.

In 'New York, New York', from Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden and Adolph Green's Broadway show, *On The Town*, there are a few choice lines that aptly underscore the eternal fascination that New York has:

"New York, New York, a visitor's place,
Where no one lives on account of the pace,
But seven million are screaming for space"

BOB ALTSHULER

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JOHNNY WILLIAMS arranged 'Sunday In New York', 'Broadway',
'Let Me Off Uptown' & 'Sidewalks Of New York'.

DICK HAZARD arranged 'Autumn In New York', 'Forty Second Street',
'Harlem Nocturne' & 'Manhattan'.

SHORTY ROGERS arranged 'Lullaby Of Birdland', 'The Brooklyn Bridge',
'New York, New York' & 'There's A Broken Heart For Every Light On Broadway'.

JOHNNY WILLIAMS appears by courtesy of Columbia Records

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4. BROADWAY
5. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE
6. LET ME OFF UPTOWN
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12. MANHATTAN
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